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International medical schools have insufficient training addressing LGBTQ+ health needs.

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Abstract -

Background: The LGBTQ+ community constitutes a significant proportion of society with unique health needs. However, healthcare services and doctors often inadequately address their needs, with insufficient training proposed as a major contributory factor. This international observational study aimed to investigate the level of training in LGBTQ+ medicine during medical school.

Method: Following validation with LGBTQ+ organisations, a survey was created to assess medical students' knowledge, sources of understanding, and areas for improvement for LGBTQ+ health issues in the curricula. The survey consisted of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions. Following a pilot, the online survey was disseminated at two medical schools in London and Singapore.

Findings: 330 respondents completed the survey, with comparable absolute numbers from both universities. At least one-third of respondents were unclear on terminologies such as 'out-of-the-closet' and 'men who have sex with men'. Additionally, respondents lacked knowledge of clinical topics such as conversion therapy. 84.2% of respondents expressed inadequacy in learning about LGBTQ+ medicine at university, with only 27.9% of respondents indicating they learnt general LGBTQ+ issues from medical curricula. Sexual health (90.9%) was well-learnt at medical schools, whilst many other topics such as gender-affirming care were not learnt (56.7%).

Conclusions: This study highlights the lack of training surrounding LGBTQ+ medicine that medical schools provide for students, with much information gathered from outside sources. Medical school curricula should be reviewed to better incorporate important issues surrounding LGBTQ+ medicine. This would better equip the next generation of doctors to address the LGBTQ+ community's health needs.

Keywords – Medical Schools, Training, LGBTQ+

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